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SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

MAJOR EXHIBITIONS PROGRAM, FY 1972

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF HISTORY AND TECHNOLOGY

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

NATIONAL AIR AND SPACE MUSEUM

(Submitted to OMB as Supplement to
FY 1972 Report)
Sept 30, 1970

MAJOR PERMANENT EXHIBITIONS OF SMITHSONIAN MUSEUMS IN FY 1972

The Smithsonian Office of Exhibits Programs designs, produces, up-dates, and maintains 15 acres of exhibits in three museums, the National Museum of History and Technology, the National Museum of Natural History and the National Air and Space Museum. In FY 1970, 13,150,000 visitors were counted entering the buildings of these museums.

For reasons described below, no new major permanent exhibition has been opened to the public in any of these important museums in more than three years. To revitalize the museums and to afford to the museum visitor the best of communication techniques and educational experiences it is proposed to produce three substantial permanent exhibitions. These will be Corridors of American History in the National Museum of History and Technology requiring $750,000; the Hall of Living Things in the National Museum of Natural History requiring $500,000 in FY 1972; and Exhibits of the Future in the National Air and Space Museum requiring $225,000. The total of $1,475,000 in nonrecurring funds will be spent for these specific exhibits largely for contractual services, supplies and equipment. These exhibits will be completed within 18 months of the appropriation of the required funds.

The purpose of museums is to educate as well as to entertain. In order for them to function effectively in both capacities, it is necessary to widen the scope of the visitors' participation in

the museum experience. This is especially important if the educational aspects of the museum are to have a lasting impact on the museum-goer. Broadening the visitors' participation can be accomplished in a variety of ways including the following: by properly orienting him, as he arrives, to the exhibits that he will be viewing; by adequately explaining individual objects in the context of their exhibit techniques; and by providing the visitor with educational materials that can be taken home to be read and studied. The reports of a visiting committee have strongly urged that the Smithsonian strengthen its popular publications program with relation to its collections and exhibits.

The funds requested for the exhibits themselves will provide for excellent descriptive labels and explanations of exhibits. In order to provide adequately for the associated visitor orientation and educational materials, an additional $75,000 are requested for films, film strips, printed catalogs, pamphlets, and related educational materials.

A CORRIDOR OF AMERICAN HISTORY: NATIONAL MUSEUM OF HISTORY AND TECHNOLOGY

The Corridor of American History is a unique concept in museological presentation of living history. It will, for the first time in any museum, indoor or out of doors, enable the visitor to be projected back through time to experience life as it was lived in the past, by physically involving all of the senses.

Until now this has been attempted with dioramas and reconstructions. Dioramas, which are featured in many museums are usually produced behind glass in varying scales to life-size, and represent various aspects of American life, work and leisure in earlier periods of history. Restored and/or reconstructed period rooms, individual buildings and even entire communities have been popular features in museum installations throughout the United States and have provided edification and education for the public. The most which these have been able to accomplish, however, has been to provide the museum-goer with merely the settings of the American past.

The proposed Corridor of American History advances considerably beyond any of these installations by enabling the visitor to participate in life as it was lived in the period 1768-1775 in a New England seaport community by totally immersing him in a number of experiences authentically recreated. As he progresses along a waterfront street in and out of original colonial buildings

which are furnished with original objects of daily living, the visitor can touch and smell and taste as well as see and hear. As he observes a variety of aspects of life going on about him, he overhears conversations and examples of entertainment as well as the confusion of sounds of a busy waterfront in the evening. Skillful introductory orientation will provide the visitor with the necessary transition from the present through the decades of time to the period of the eve of the American Revolution, so that he becomes a part of the community which provides the setting for his experience. As he approaches the dock from shipboard and progresses along an inclined cobbled street, he is enabled to glimpse a selection of incidents in the work, home and leisure life of the mid-18th century, and he is permitted to select the experiences to witness and of which he becomes a participant, against a background of ships at anchor and waterfront activity.

In addition to views of shops in which shopkeepers and craftsmen are working late in the evening, he will become involved in more direct experiences. In the tap-room of the local tavern, he will overhear exchange of local and shipping gossip, dissatisfaction expressed in discussion of colonial problems which led to the Revolution. There he will observe the mixture of the community's social components which the tavern provided in this time, including prominent merchants and tradesmen, intermingled with shipmasters and seamen, and passing travelers. Another important experience

is encountered "At the Sign of the Quadrant," the shop of the ships chandler and instrument maker, where shipmasters gathered to purchase supplies for the next voyage, have repairs made, and to exchange shipping news. Further along the street he may observe a printer working late at the press as he prepares his newspaper for distribution the following day, and he may hear the sounds of revelry emanating from one of the buildings where a party is in progress, to mention just a few.

The exhibit emphasizes involvement of all of the visitor's sensory perceptions by means of new developments in audio-visual techniques and other devices to be developed and coordinated which will provide tangible evidence of contemporary activity. A realistic assembly of varied settings outside and within original contemporary buildings, which have been re-erected in part or in full with infinite details of authentic landscaping and furnishings, provide the scene for the presentation. The exhibit will include no labels or explanatory texts. In addition to serving as the scene for the sensory experiences described, it is also as an index to the related materials displayed throughout the Museum in the permanent exhibition halls, in which the visitor is enabled to identify the objects he has observed in actual use in the Corridor.

Such an experiment in the telling of history is feasible only in the National Museum of History and Technology because it is the only Museum which has all the necessary resources. The Museum has a staff of scholars who are acknowledged authorities in the required aspects of Colonial American

life, and it houses the impressive National Collections of original artifacts, which can be utilized for the exhibit.

A New England seaport has been selected as the setting because in such a community was to be found the most important and most varied aspects of Colonial American life, which have not been expressed in other forms by such installations as Colonial Williamsburg, Mystic Seaport and the Beth Page Village, for example.

It will be possible to develop additional Corridors of American History which relate to each of the succeeding centuries of American history, in which can be provided contemporary experience in each of the major regions of the United States, such as a midwestern town in the 19th century, or a West Coast city in the 20th century.

The increasing interest in the American past which is accompanying the approach of the American Revolution Bicentennial commemoration makes the production of this exhibit particularly timely and appropriate so that it can serve as a starting point for other related programs in acknowledgment of the nation's past. Moreover, the Corridor will contribute to an awareness of our roots and a rekindling of pride in our national heritage which is vitally needed in our time.

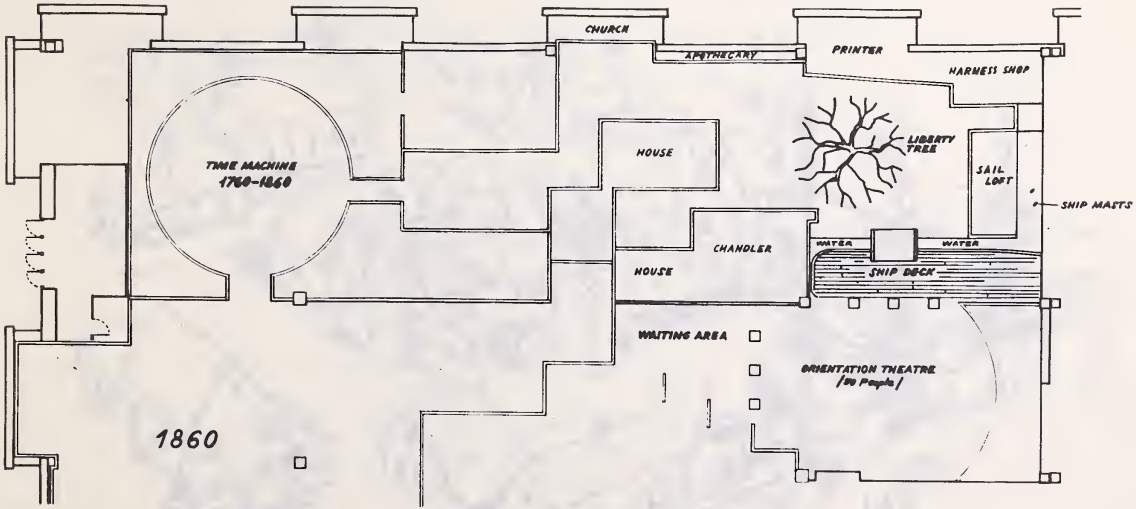
Part I. Eighteenth century corridor segment

Construction of period exteriors and interiors	$275,000.00
Audio-visual experimentation and purchase of equipment	100,000.00
Acquisition of furnishings and objects of daily living	50,000.00

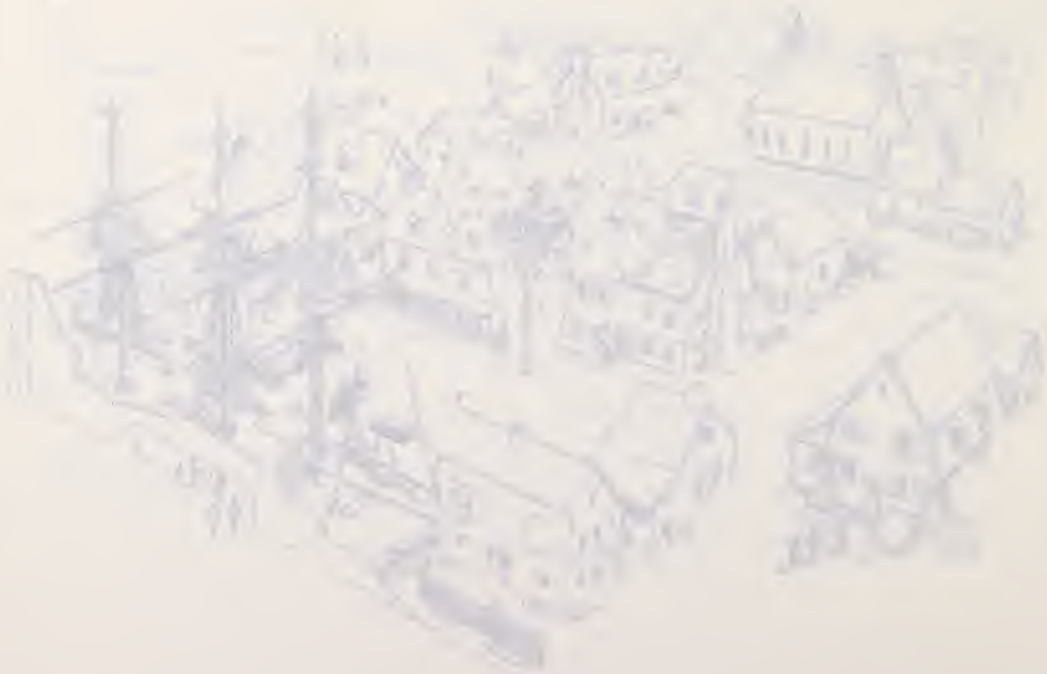
Part II. Introduction Orientation and One "Time Machine"

Preparation of introductory orientation unit	25,000.00
Construction of a "time machine" unit	50,000.00
Audio-visual experimentation and purchase of equipment	250,000.00
Total	$750,000.00

It is estimated that the total of $750,000 required to produce and install this exhibition will be applied to (21) travel $5,000; (22) transportation of things $15,000; (25) other services $645,000; (26) supplies $10,000; and (31) equipment $75,000.


CHURCH
APOTHECARY
PRINTER
HARNESS SHOP
TIME MACHINE
1760-1860
HOUSE
LIBERTY TREE
SAIL LOFT
SHIP MASTS
CHANDLER
WATER
WATER
HOUSE
SHIP DECK
WAITING AREA
ORIENTATION THEATRE
(90 People)
1860

New England Seaport Town, 1768-1775



THE WORLD OF LIVING THINGS: THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

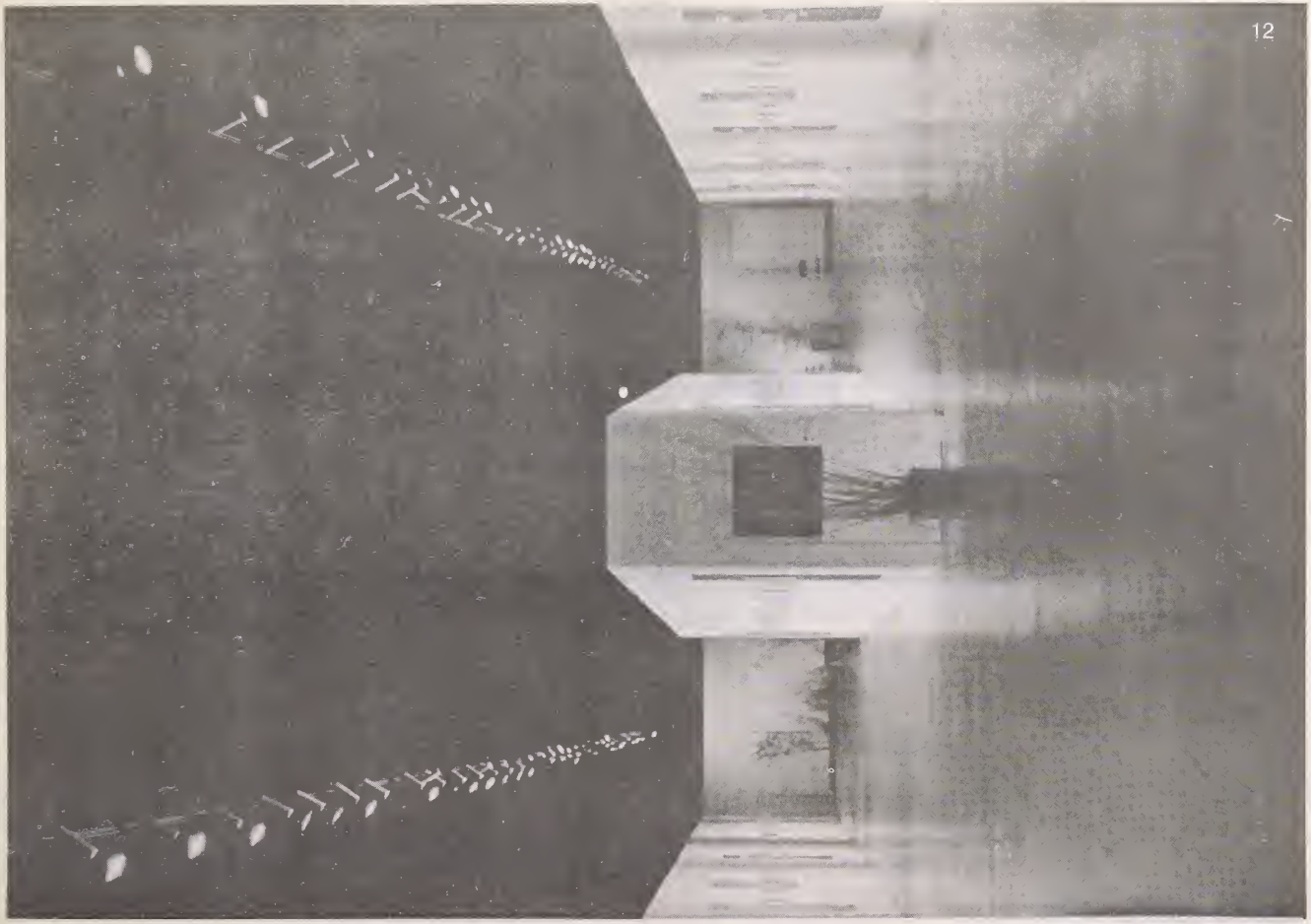
A major exhibition on the interrelated "laws of nature" is designed which will include both an introduction to ecology and the exposition of worldwide environmental balances and imbalances. Issues and options will be presented to the visitor with the opportunity for him to react to them and to see and consider the consequences of his choices.

Three years of development have been devoted to the planning of this exhibition. Science writer Peter Farb, working with Smithsonian scientists and exhibition and communication specialists, has produced the specifications for a significant educational exhibition. The objective is to stimulate the hundreds of thousands of visitors to the Museum of Natural History to participate in conservation programs and to inform them how to express and act upon their concern. About 4,000,000 visitors a year will view this exhibition. It will continue with changes for years of current usefulness.

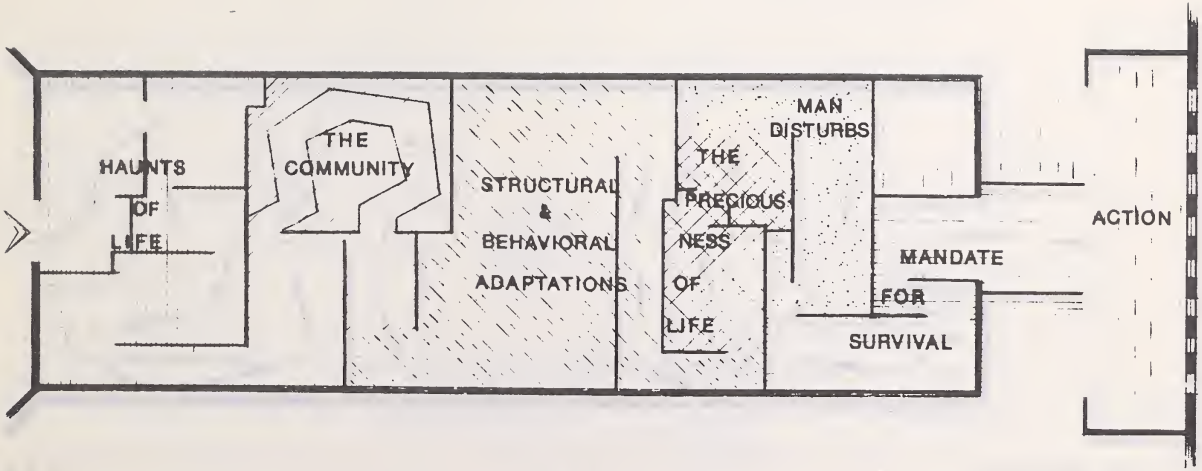
The exhibit will combine modern methods of communication through exhibits and the authority of the Museum's scholarly scientists. It will be designed for experimentation, testing, and development of its effectiveness as its use is observed. It will have the flexibility to be up-dated as environmental sciences evolve. It will have both present and future values in the critical effort to

insure a livable environment on earth. It will put the most significant of the Museum's vast collection resources in the service of ideas explaining a vital problem of our times.

For the production of the exhibition $500,000 will be required in FY 1972 and $250,000 in FY 1973. The exhibition will be completed in 18 months after the initial appropriation of funds. The $500,000 required in FY 1972 will be used as follows: (21) travel $5,000; (24) printing and reproduction $5,000; (25) other services $300,000; (26) supplies $60,000; and (31) equipment $130,000.

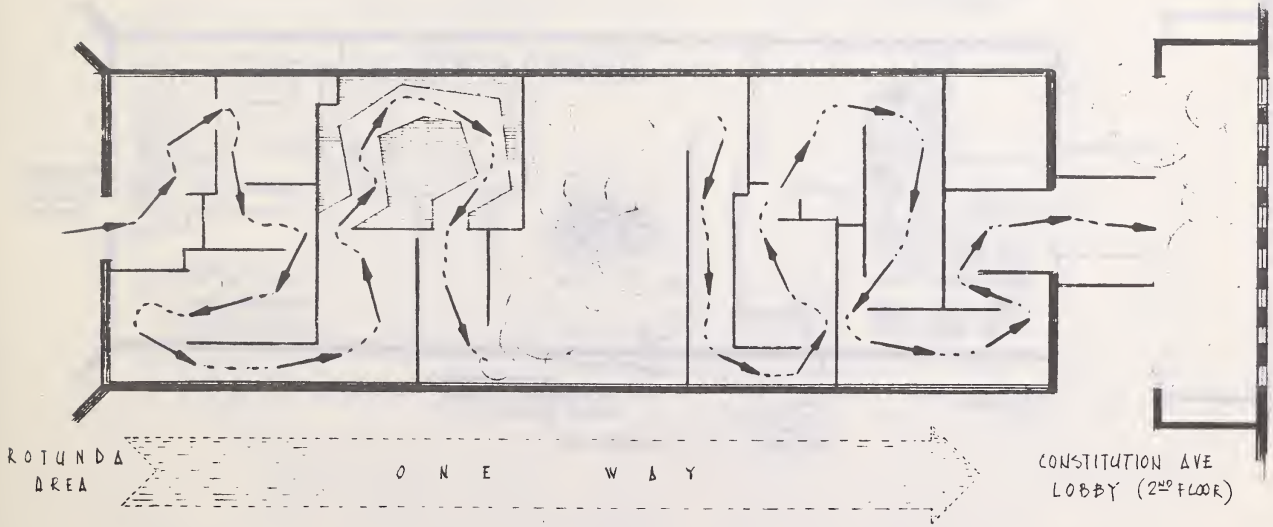


Hall 10 USNMNH
One time art hall
To be renovated as The World of Living Things



World of Living Things

HALL 10



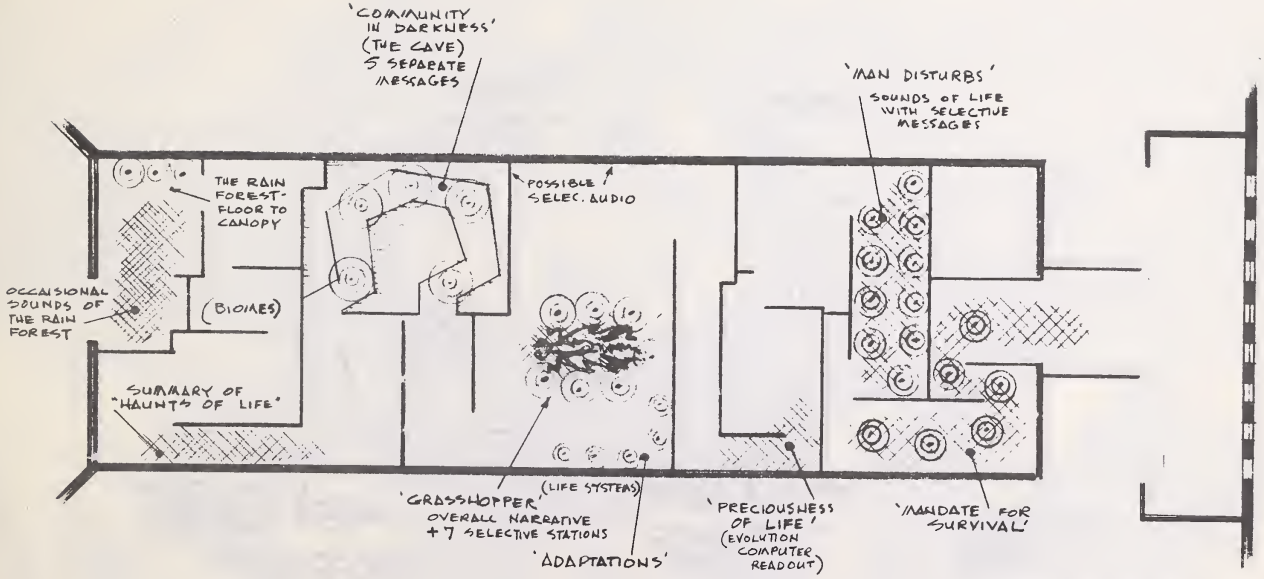
CONTROLLED CIRCULATION

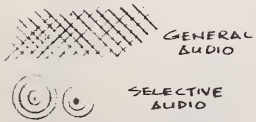
FREE CIRCULATION

World of Living Things

FLOW PATTERN

HALL 10

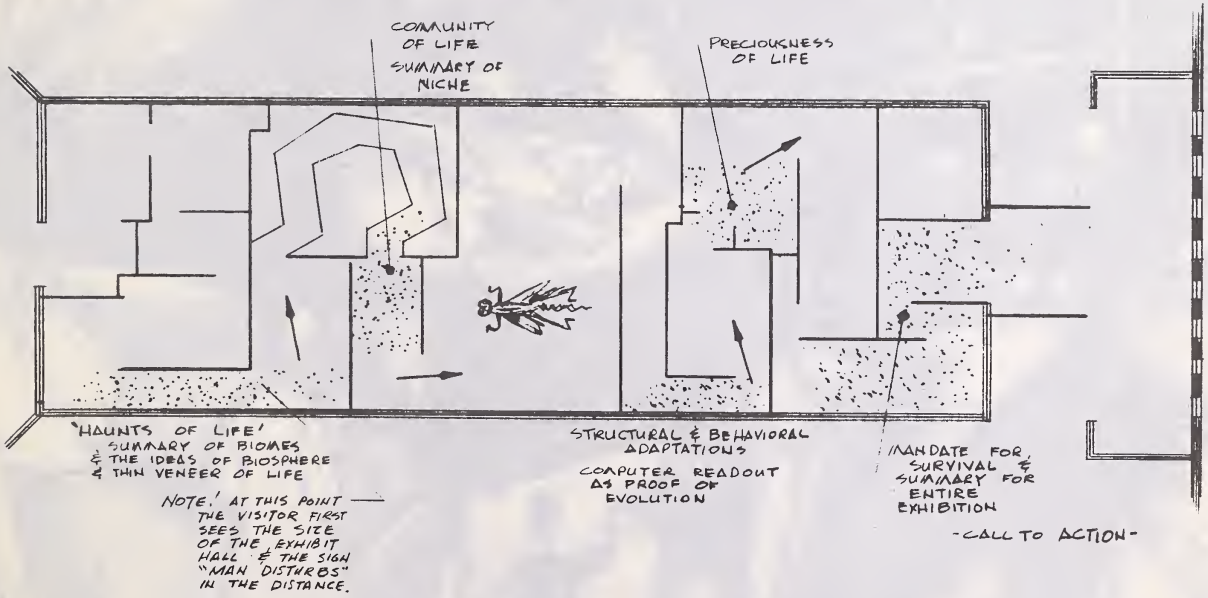




World of Living Things

AUDIO

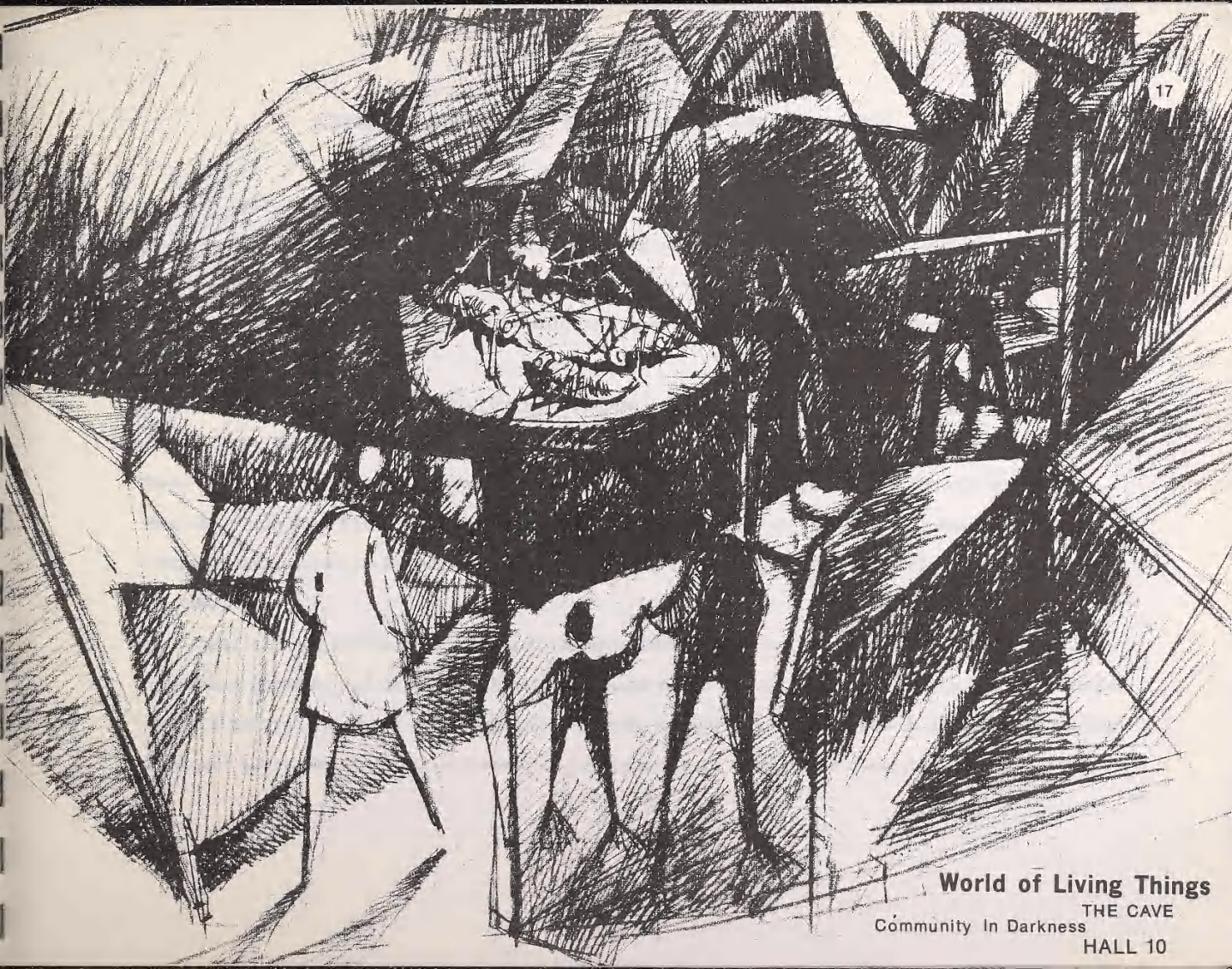
HALL 10



World of Living Things

SUMMARY AREAS

HALL 10



World of Living Things

THE CAVE

Community In Darkness

HALL 10

EXHIBITS OF THE FUTURE: THE NATIONAL AIR AND SPACE MUSEUM

Our national accomplishments in air and space have excited Americans of all ages to know more about the history and the promise of these challenging fields of enterprise. During the past summer 9,000 to 10,000 persons a day came to the Arts and Industries Building to see the few but highly significant air and space craft selected from the large collection of the National Air and Space Museum.

The visitors saw the original Wright Airplane, the "Spirit of St. Louis," the X-15, The Glenn Capsule, the Moon Rock, back up satellites, Gemini spacecraft, and a full size Saturn engine. These exhibits are seen now awkwardly displayed on the floor and overhead in the old building. They are shown with little interpretation and without emphasis on the cultural changes that air transport has caused in the world or of the new ways of viewing the earth which space exploration provides.

Until the new building for the Air and Space Museum is built there will be little opportunity to produce thematic and detailed exhibitions around these great historical objects. The new building will provide the space and facilities in which to show cause and effect of significant developments and place America's air and space accomplishments in their human context.

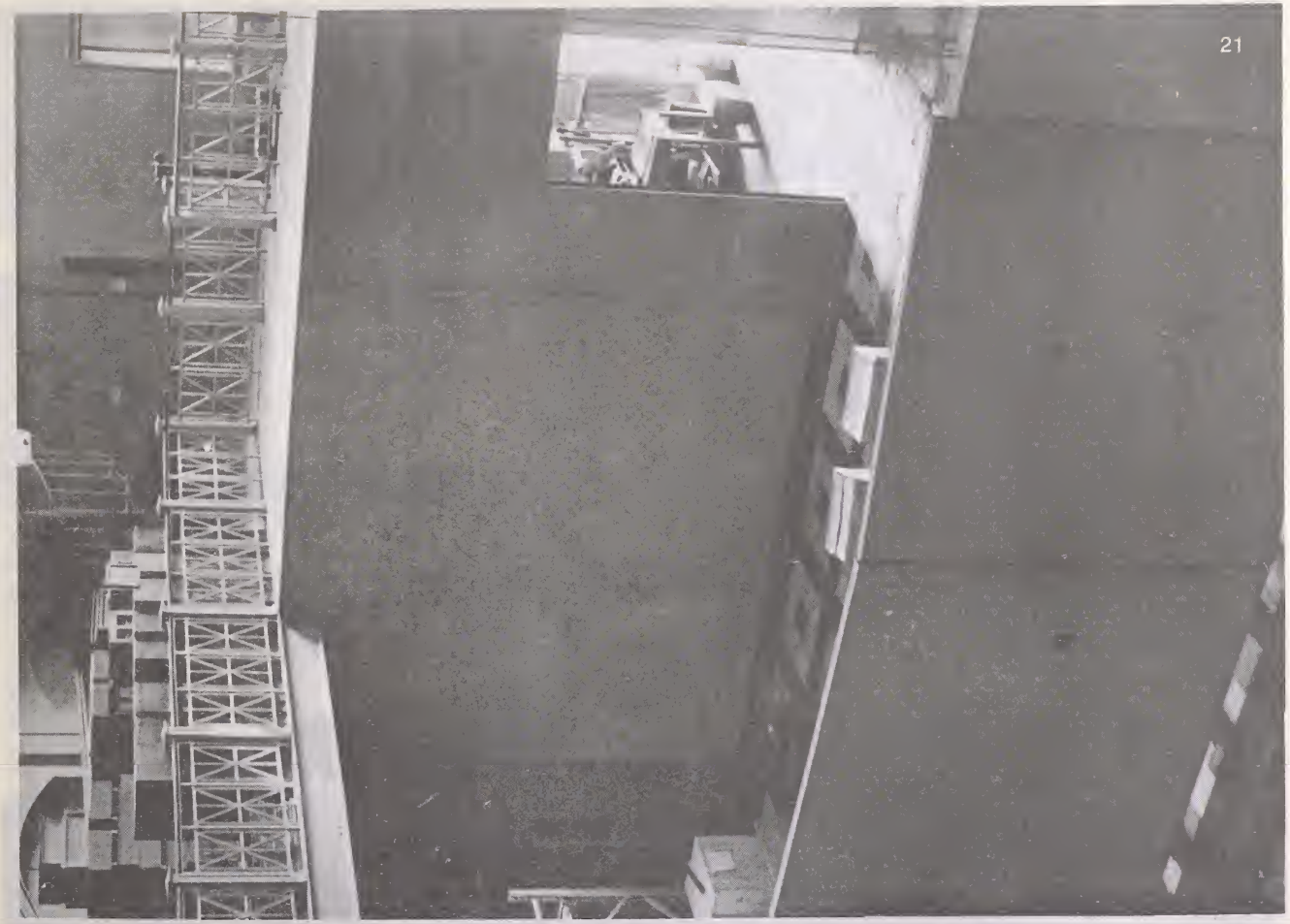
In the old building the opportunity exists to produce and test exhibit units which will be new and novel, which will be ready for installation in the new building, and which will enliven the museum experience for hundreds of thousands of visitors prior to the completion of the new museum.

In the east and northeast galleries of the old building, temporary partitions will be removed in FY 1971 to improve the circulation of crowds of visitors through the contiguous halls. At the same time Smithsonian designers are planning eleven educational and information attractions for these galleries. They will be installed in FY 1972 as funds become available.

The exhibitions planned will be participation and reaction devices that in the new building will attract the visitor and focus his attention upon more detailed, thematic and interpretive displays of the original air and space craft. Visitors will fly an airplane or dock a spacecraft, stand in a control tower and hear the interchange of communications and instructions between controllers and pilots, experiment with aerodynamic shapes in flowing fluids, experience the acceleration of reaction and jet propulsion, and witness the processes of recovery and re-cycling which permit survival in space. These and similar units will be designed and developed for use in the new building to introduce the visitor to intellectual themes explaining the meaning and the

effects of air and space research and development upon the lives of people and the understanding of the world's resources and limitations.

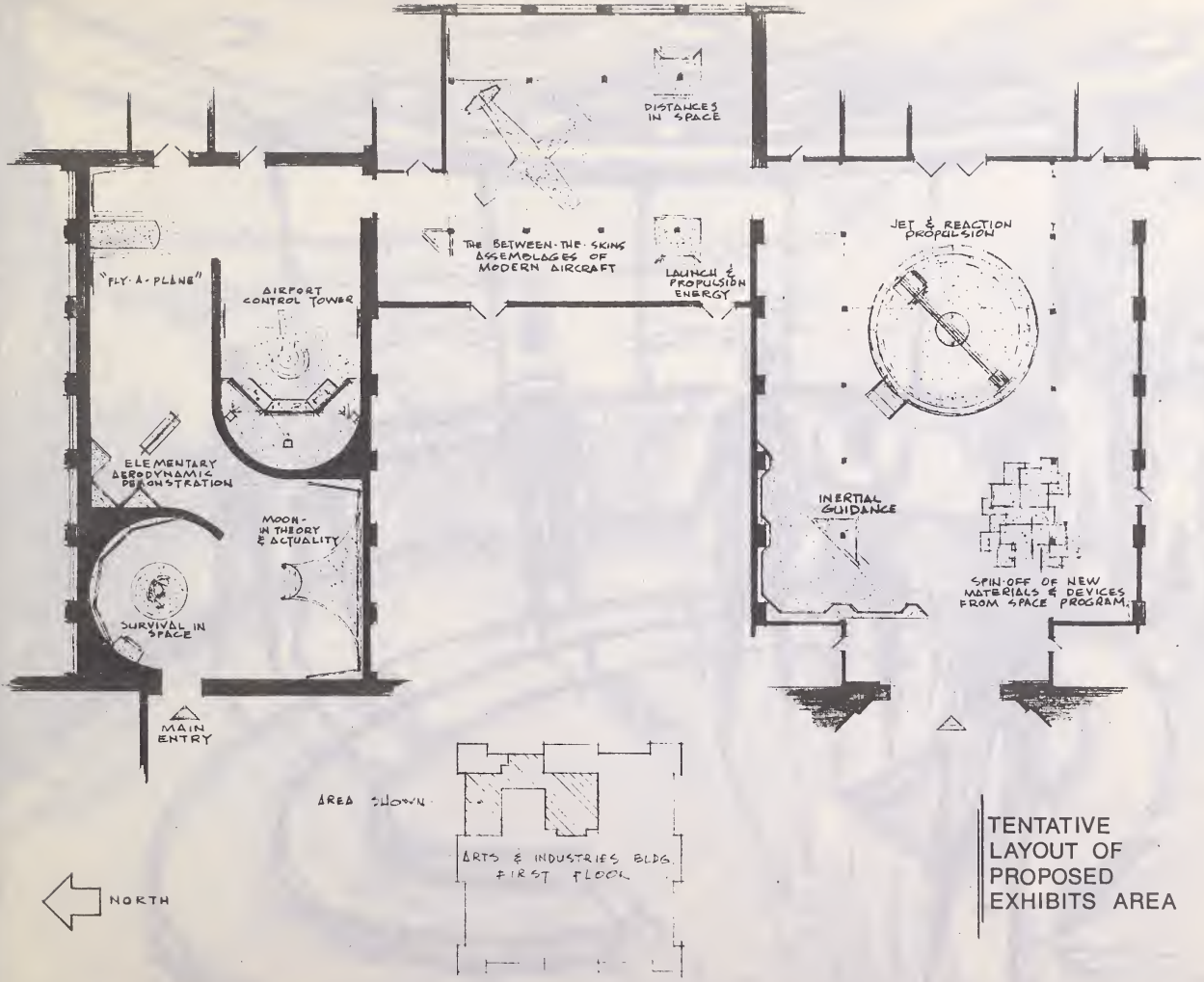
Contributions of machines and systems will be solicited from the air and space industry but funds will be required for travel to solicit the material, to ship it, to contract for the production of components, and to purchase necessary equipment averaging slightly over $20,000 an exhibit or a total of $225,000; estimated to be applied to (21) travel $5,000; (22) transportation of things $15,000; (24) printing $3,000; (25) other services $120,000; (26) supplies $4,000; and (31) equipment $96,000.



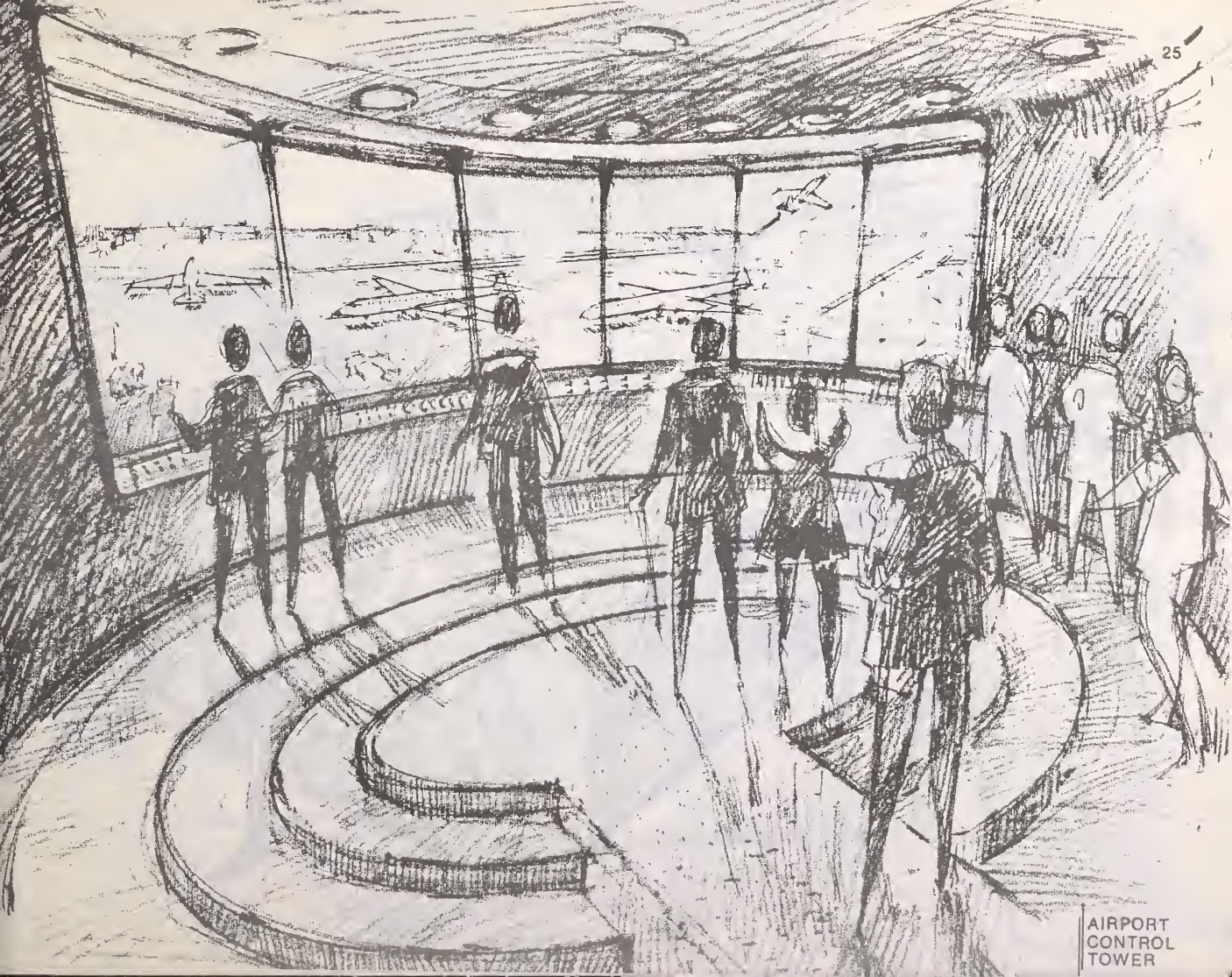
Arts & Industries Bldg.
Temporary service area
To be renovated with NASM exhibits

Arts & Industries Bldg.
Temporary exhibit area
To be renovated with NASM exhibits

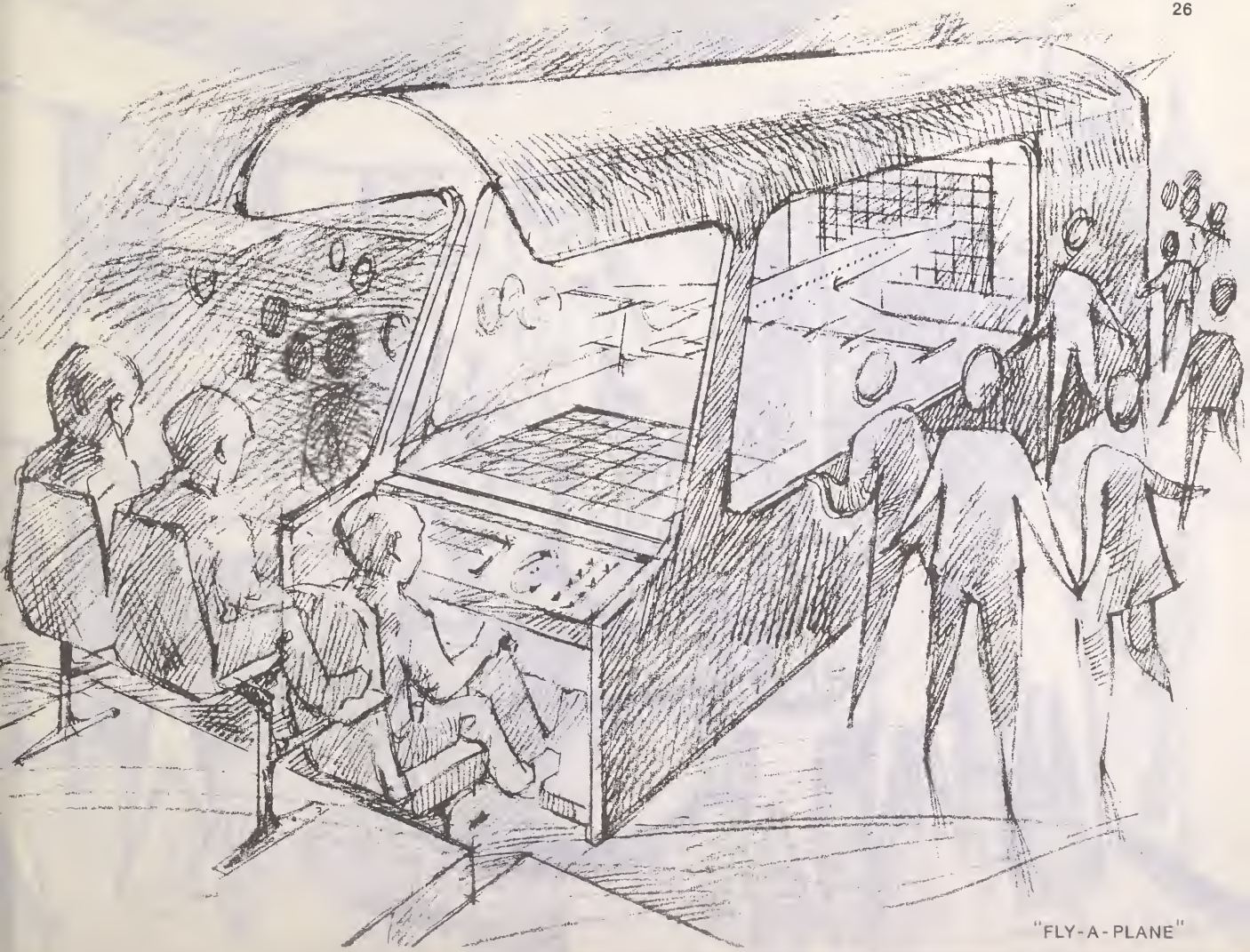
Arts & Industries Bldg.
Existing conditions, East Hall
To be renovated with NASM exhibits



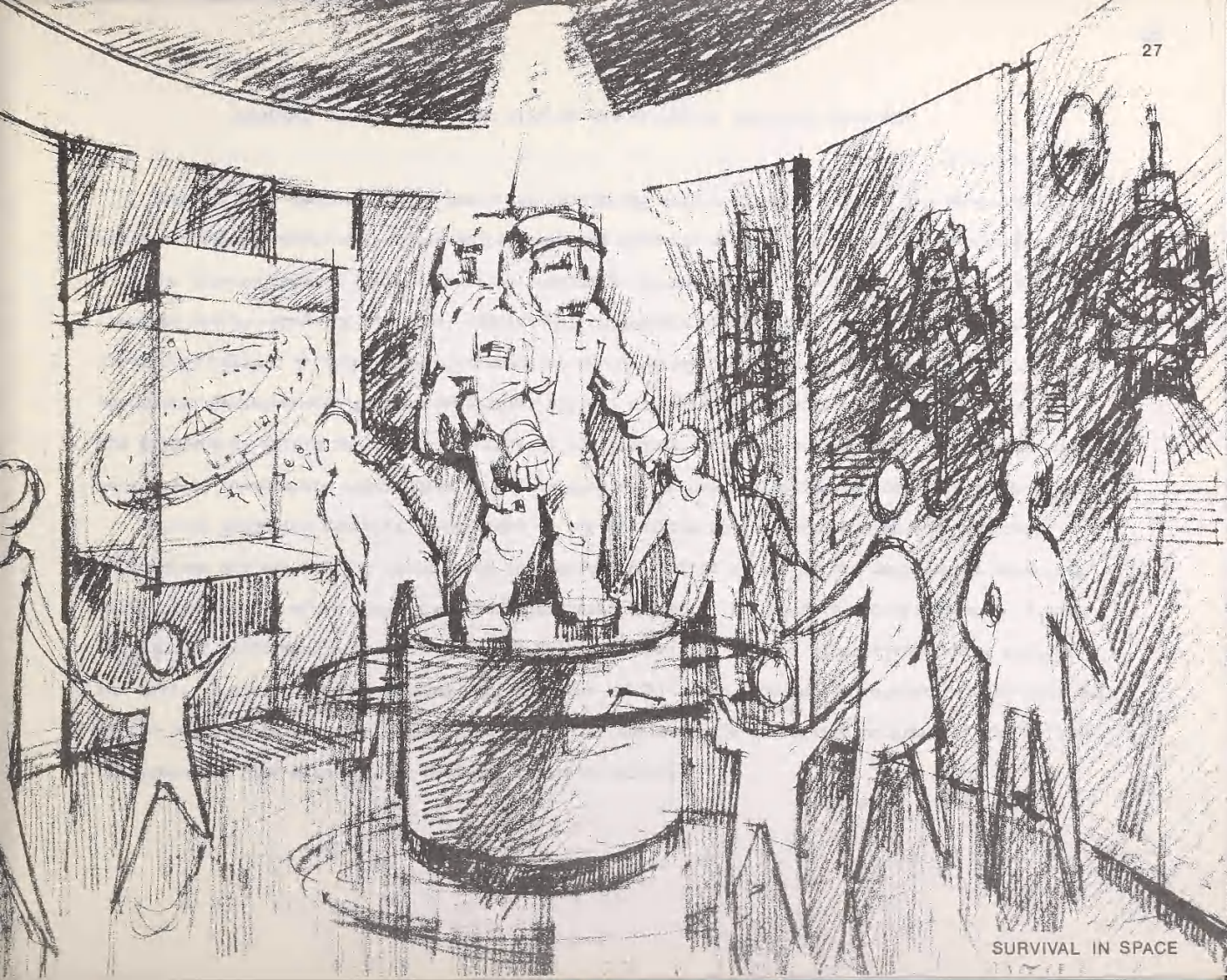
TENTATIVE LAYOUT OF PROPOSED EXHIBITS AREA



AIRPORT
CONTROL
TOWER



"FLY-A-PLANE"



EXAMPLES OF THE CONTINUING WORK OF THE OFFICE OF EXHIBITS PROGRAMS

The Office of Exhibits has a heavy and continuing work load which absorbs its base capability and makes it impossible to produce major permanent exhibits without the funds requested, above.

The huge acreage of exhibits must be constantly maintained to repair the wear resulting from constant use by crowds of visitors. Individual components of the existing permanent exhibits are frequently changed to bring them up-to-date as the curators develop scientific and historical doctrine. An impressive program of special topical exhibits (as many as 60 a year) are designed and produced to inform the public on subjects of immediate interest such as the laser or the moon rock, or to commemorate individuals or events such as the events leading to the American Revolution.

Aid in preparing exhibits is provided to the Anacostia Neighborhood Museum and temporary exhibitions are adapted for circulation throughout the United States by the Smithsonian Traveling Exhibition Service after showing at the Smithsonian. Support is given to activities such as the Division of Performing Arts for the annual Folk Life Festival and for other events which enliven the Mall. Posters, labels, display equipment and exhibits are produced on request for the Main Hall of the original Smithsonian Building and in aid of the separate exhibition programs of the National Collection of Fine Arts and the National Portrait Gallery.

Much time and effort is devoted to informing, demonstrating, and training in exhibition techniques for the personnel of other museums. In one year over 400 individuals came to the Smithsonian for information or demonstrations including about 30 staff members of other museums who were given work training for periods of three weeks to a year.

It is the combination of the heavy work load of exhibition services, the level budgeting of recent years, and the escalation of costs of contractual services, supplies, and equipment which make it necessary to request nonrecurring funds to provide the production costs of specific major permanent exhibitions.

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